

Wyoming Court Security Commission Minutes

Casper, Wyoming

January 6, 2010

Call to Order

The Wyoming Court Security Commission public meeting was called to order at 10:25 a.m. on January 6, 2010 by Director Joe Moore at the Hilton Garden Inn in Casper, Wyoming. Prior to this meeting members of the Commission toured the Townsend Court Facility in Casper, Wyoming. Chairman Moore expressed appreciation for the tour and told Kevin White to thank Ms. Odendahl for the work she did in scheduling the tour and setting up the meeting at the Hilton Garden Inn.

Roll Call/Introductions

Chairman Moore welcomed Sheriff Jerry Colson to the Commission, replacing Lori Emmert who retired as Douglas Police Chief. Roll call was taken by Pam Nelson, Administrative Assistant for Wyoming Office of Homeland Security.

In Attendance: Chairman Joe Moore – Wyoming Office of Homeland Security
Judge Denise Nau – Laramie County Circuit Court
Sheriff Skip Hornecker – Fremont County Sheriff
Sheriff Jerry Colson – Carbon County Sheriff
Representative Kermit Brown – Wyoming House of Representatives
Senator Drew Perkins – Wyoming Senate
Meri Ramsey – Wyoming Attorney General's Office
Kevin White – Court Security Officer/Supreme Court
Keith Harris – Wyoming Office of Homeland Security
Pam Nelson – Wyoming Office of Homeland Security
Gavin Donnelly – Wyoming Office of Homeland Security

(VIA TELECONFERENCE)

Judge Jeffrey Donnell – 2nd Judicial Court, Laramie, WY
Jeni Stone – Campbell County Attorney

Absent: Justice William Hill – Wyoming Supreme Court
Commissioner Bill Brewer – Park County
JoAnn Odendahl – Deputy State Court Administrator/Supreme Court

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Sheriff Hornecker to approve minutes from the July 14, 2009 Commission meeting. Representative Brown seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Chairman Moore read an article taken from “msnbc.com” about the shooting of two federal marshals by a gunman in the lobby of a federal building in downtown Las Vegas, NV on January 5, 2010. Also Sheriff Hornecker gave a summary about the December 23, 2009 lockdowns of the Riverton and Lander courthouses. These lockdowns were necessary due to a threat of violence directed at Fremont County Child Support Services. The article on this event was in the Lander Journal, dated December 27, 2009 and

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both articles were included in Commission members' packets for this meeting. These articles are good examples for the need to increase courthouse security.

Sub-Committee Reports

A. Equipment, Facilities & Architecture Committee

Sheriff Hornecker stated there were no further items to report. The equipment list was included in the Wyoming Court Security Commission Annual Report for 2009. A motion was made by Judge Donnell to include the equipment list in Wyoming Court Security Standard 2010-1. Representative Brown seconded. Motion passed.

B. Training Committee

Judge Nau stated the status of the committee remains the same as it was at the July 2009 meeting; no further work has been completed. Sheriff Colson will chair the training committee. The 40-hour Court Security Course, included in the 2009 Annual Report, will be taught again at the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy February 8-12, 2010.

Judge Nau recommended standard for training be basic because counties will want to incorporate their own specific needs into the training program. Chairman Moore met on January 5, 2010 with Dave Harris, Director of WLEA, to discuss Court Security training which will be the focus of the next Wyoming Court Security Commission meeting and Dave Harris will give an overview of this training.

C. Protocol & Procedures

A motion was made by Judge Donnell to send Wyoming Court Security Standard 2009-1 to all Local Court Security Management Committees. Representative Brown seconded. Motion passed.

D. Local Court Security Management Committee

Keith Harris received names and contact information for Local Court Security Management Committees from the following counties: Albany, Big Horn, Campbell, Carbon, Crook, Fremont, Johnson, Laramie, Lincoln, Natrona, Park, Platte, Sheridan, Sublette, Sweetwater, Teton, Uinta, Washakie and Weston. Converse, Goshen, Hot Springs and Niobrara counties have not yet reported their committees, but will provide them to Keith Harris. Each committee is required to submit a report of accomplishments to this Commission by July 2010. Judge Donnell will send corrected names of the Local Court Security Management Committee for Albany County to Keith Harris.

Judge Donnell indicated he would like to address and adopt a standard for court entrance security. Sheriff Colson agreed with Judge Donnell a standard is needed; the Carbon County Courthouse has three separate entrances. Representative Brown stated legislature, as a general rule, would be amenable to establishing best practice standard, but there would need to be consensus by county commissioners to agree to it and there may be the issue about funding counties will want from the state. Judge Donnell stated standards are not binding.

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Representative Brown stated the first step would be to promulgate the standard and Judge Donnell stated he would be willing to work up a draft for this standard. Ms. Stone indicated in talking with other county attorneys throughout the state, there is much resistance in restricting courthouse access. Senator Perkins stated people in the courthouse will always be at risk because the courthouse is the symbol of power and authority by which people direct their anger for perceived injustices. Sheriff Hornecker agreed with Representative Brown on the need for consensus by county commissioners, but stated there may be resistance by other county officials as well. Ms. Stone suggested it might be a good opportunity to have Commission members speak about this standard at the Wyoming County Commissioners Association meeting scheduled for September 2010.

Lunch Break

Commission members took a half hour lunch break with food provided by Hilton Garden Inn.

Meeting Resumed

The Wyoming Court Security Commission, led by Chairman Moore, resumed at 11:30 a.m.

2010 Legislative Agenda

A. Contingency Fund for "High Profile Cases"

Chairman Moore discussed this item with Governor Freudenthal prior to this Commission meeting and it was the Governor's recommendation there be a line item added for high profile cases to the Supreme Court appropriations. The amount previously recommended was \$100,000. Judge Donnell stated this was the first he heard about the recommendation, and during the meeting, followed up with a phone call to the Supreme Court to see if it had been added to their budget. It had not formerly been added to the budget, and at the time of this meeting, it was too late to do so since the Joint Appropriations Committee hearing with the Supreme Court was to take place the next day. A suggestion was then made by the Commission to possibly add the contingency fund as an amendment to the Supreme Court budget. Representative Brown indicated he would follow this budget during the legislative process.

B. Firearms within Courthouses

As of this date, there is no state statute prohibiting carrying firearms within courthouses. Meri Ramsey, legal counsel from the Wyoming Attorney General's Office, indicated there is however, a statute for municipalities which does address this issue. Senator Perkins stated he will initiate legislation on this issue in an interim committee but it does need to start in the House. Senator Perkins indicated it may be difficult to put this item into legislation due to the perception it would be an assault to the second item in the Bill of Rights.

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New Items for Discussion

Chairman Moore will send letters to Local Court Security Management Committees with copies of Wyoming Court Security Standards 2009-1 and 2010-1. Chairman Moore encouraged members of the Commission to visit courthouses in the state when the opportunity arises. He has toured four facilities to date. He will send a letter of appreciation to Sheriff Benton for the tour of the Townsend Court Facility.

Annual Report 2010

The next Wyoming Court Security Commission Annual Report to the legislature will be due September 2010.

Public Comments

Gavin Donnelly commented he did not see body armor listed as part of the minimal equipment necessary to conduct court security. Sheriff Hornecker replied it was not on the list because the armor is becoming a part of the standard uniform, but he was agreeable to adding body armor to the list. Prior to creating the Standard 2010-1 for minimum equipment, item number 18 will be added to include body armor.

Chairman Moore was pleased with the tour of the Townsend Court Facility and thanked all those who attended the tour and this meeting.

Schedule of Next Meeting

The next Wyoming Court Security Commission meeting will be in Laramie, Wyoming in July with a tour of the Albany County Courthouse. The actual location and date for the meeting will be forthcoming. Motion was made by Judge Nau to adjourn this meeting. Sheriff Hornecker seconded. Motion passed.

Adjournment

Chairman Moore adjourned the meeting at 11:53 a.m.